

The Unfinished Garden

by Barbara Claypole White

Reader and Discussion Questions

1. Do you believe in the healing power of gardening?
2. James is an unlikely hero. What do you think draws Tilly to him?
3. Do you have a favorite moment, scene, or line in the book?
4. What roles do trust and mistrust play in the characters' relationships?
5. Why do you think issues of control appear repeatedly throughout the novel?
6. Is it reasonable for Tilly to cling to guilt after carrying out her husband's final wishes?
7. What role does Isaac play in helping her navigate her feelings?
8. What are the parallels between Tilly's guilt and James's fear?
9. How does the parent/child relationship impact other relationships in the novel?
10. In what ways do you think Sebastian and David have played important but different roles in Tilly's life?
11. Finding the balance between closing yourself off and opening your life to others is an important theme of the novel. How do you think the characters achieve this?
12. In the final chapter, Tilly says that she needs James. In what ways do you think Tilly and James need each other?
13. How do you think Tilly's relationship with James will differ from her marriage to David?
14. How has Tilly changed from the beginning of the book to the ending? What events have caused her to change?
15. What obstacles, if any, do you see for James and Tilly in the future?